

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

1.) Claim Amendments

The Applicant has amended claim 52 and canceled claims 39-51 and 55-68. Accordingly, claims 52-54 remain pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

2.) Examiner Objections – Drawings

The Examiner objected to Figures 1-4, stating that boxes 101-117 should be labeled. The Applicant submits herewith replacement sheets, adding labels as suggested by the Examiner. The Examiner's approval of the drawings is respectfully requested.

3.) Examiner Objections – Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner objected to the Information Disclosure Statement submitted on October 1, 2004, stating legible copies of each cited document were not provided. The IDS submitted by Applicant on October 1, 2004, merely listed documents previously transmitted to the USPTO by the International Searching Authority. As a courtesy, however, the Applicant submits herewith copies of the Japanese patent abstracts listed in the IDS.

4.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claims 51, 57-59 and 68 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter as the invention. Whereas each of those claims have been cancelled, the Examiner's rejections thereof are moot.

5.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a)

The Examiner rejected claims 39-41, 43-55 and 57-68 as being unpatentable over Nathan *et al.* (US 5,537,108) in view of Shigeru (JP 61-53862) and Drekmeier, *et al.* (US 5,612,662); and claims 42, 43 and 56 as being unpatentable over Nathan in

view of Seely, *et al.* (US 2,844,778). Whereas claims 39-41, 43-51 and 55-68 have been cancelled, the Examiner's rejections thereof are moot. The Applicant traverses the rejection of claims 52-54.

Claim 52 recites:

52. A method for connecting one of several first items to one of several second items, wherein the first items and the second items are connected to a cross-connect including switching columns, switching rows, addressing columns, addressing rows and fuse-relays; said method comprising the steps of:

selecting a second item to which a selected first item is to be connected;

addressing an addressing column and an addressing row in the cross-connect; and

transmitting a high current through said addressing row and addressing column **sufficient to blow a fuse in one of the fuse-relays whereby a connection is caused to be made or broken between a switching row and a switching column, thereby connecting the selected first item with the selected second item;**

wherein the first items are terminals and the second items are xDSL modems. (emphasis added)

The Applicant's invention solves the problem in the prior art of requiring a manual installation of a Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) modem in subscriber line equipment. In prior art subscriber line equipment, mechanical or electrical relays have been employed. Such relays can be expensive, physically large and often consume a lot of power. The invention rests on the recognition that, in most cases, a subscriber's line, or terminal, is connected to a DSL modem when they subscribe to such service, but it is seldom disconnected. The invention utilizes a cross-connect that employs fuse-relays to couple DSL modems to subscriber terminals. When it is desired to couple a terminal to a DSL modem, a fuse in a fuse-relay is blown which causes a connection to be made or broken between a switching row and switching column.

Claim 52 has been amended to include the limitations previously in claim 55. With respect to the rejection of claims 52 and 55, the Examiner merely stated that "the claimed method steps would have been necessitated by the structure." The Examiner points to no teachings in any of the cited references that, either

alone or in combination, teach the invention recited in claim 52. Specifically, none of the cited references relate to, much less describe, the interconnection of terminals and DSL modems. Therefore, the Examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness of claim 52. Furthermore, whereas claims 53-54 are dependent from claim 52, and include the limitations thereof, those claims are also patentable over Nathan in view of Shigeru and Drekmeier.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicant believes all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for claims 52-54.

The Applicant requests a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would further or expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: March 20, 2006

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